DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 396 038 UD 030 994

AUTHOR	Rivera-Batiz, Francisco L.
TITLE	Bridging the Gender Gap: The Economic Status of Women in New York City, 1980-1990. IUME Research Report 94-1.
INSTITUTION	Columbia Univ., New York, N.Y. Inst. for Urban and Minority Education.
PUB DATE	16 Jan 94
NOTE	18p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Age Differences; Census Figures; *Economic Factors; Educational Attainment; *Equal Opportunities (Jobs); *Females; *Income; Labor Force; Salary Wage Differentials; *Sex Differences; Sex Discrimination; Socioeconomic Status; Trend Analysis; Urban Areas
IDENTIFIERS	*New York (New York)

ABSTRACT

This research report presents data that show that substantial progress was made toward economic equality on the basis of gender in New York (New York) during the 1980s. Using the 1980 and 1990 U.S. Census of Population for New York, the study demonstrates that, in the 1980s: (1) the labor force participation of women grew sharply while that of men remained relatively stable; (2) the proportion of women employed full-time increased dramatically; (3) the earnings shortfall of fully-employed women relative to men narrowed considerably, especially for younger cohorts; and (4) there was a significant increase in the proportion of women in the higher-paying jobs that men used to dominate. In spite of this overall progress, there are still serious concerns about the relative economic status of women. The boom of the 1980s was not equally shared, since women at the bottom of the economic ladder made few gains and the condition of those in unskilled occupations actually worsened during this period. Workers with low levels of education did not benefit as greatly as did those with higher levels of education. Trends for New York City resemble those for the nation as a whole. (Contains 10 tables.) (SLD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 396 038

INSTITUTE FOR URBAN AND MINORITY EDUCATION

BRIDGING THE GENDER GAP:

THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN IN NEW YORK CITY

1980 - 1990

By

Dr. Francisco L. Rivera-Batiz
Director
Institute for Urban and Minority Education
Teachers College, Columbia University
New York, New York

Teachers College

Columbia University

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
E. Flaxman
IUME
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

New York, New York 10027

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BRIDGING THE GENDER GAP:

THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN IN NEW YORK CITY

1980 - 1990

By

Dr. Francisco L. Rivera-Batiz
Director
Institute for Urban and Minority Education
Teachers College, Columbia University
New York, New York

January 16, 1994

IUME Research Report 94-1

The author is grateful to Robert Agodini and Deboyioti Sarkar for their efficient research assistance.

THE INSTITUTE FOR URBAN AND MINORITY EDUCATION

The Institute for Urban and Minority Education (IUME) is located at Teachers College, Columbia University, in upper Manhattan, New York City. Teachers College is a graduate school at Columbia University, preparing professionals in the fields of education, health and psychology. IUME, founded in 1972, is committed to helping all individuals function at their fullest potential in an increasingly urban and diverse society.

IUME engages in the following types of activities:

- conducts research, translates and applies it to practical situations, and publishes findings;
- provides innovative services for educational decision makers, administrators, and practitioners, by developing programs, techniques, instruments, and materials; and
- seeks to influence public policy on educational issues related to racial groups, ethnic groups, and women.

The Institute maintains an active publications program which includes research reports, policy briefs, working papers, educational materials, and book-length volumes.

IUME STAFF

Director
Dr. Francisco L. Rivera-Batiz
Associate Professor of Economics and Education
Teachers College, Columbia University

Associate Director for Information Dissemination
Dr. Erwin Flaxman
Director, ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education
Teachers College, Columbia University

Associate Director for Research and Evaluation
Dr. Celia Genishi
Professor of Education
Teachers College, Columbia University

Associate Director for Professional Development and Educational Services
Dr. Marietta Saravia-Shore
Director, Cross-Cultural Literacy Center
Teachers College, Columbia University

The central offices of IUME are located at 201 Main Hall, 525 West 120th Street, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, New York 10027. For more information on IUME contact: Paula Russell-Hendricks, Administrative Associate (212) 678-3780.

BRIDGING THE GENDER GAP:
THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN IN NEW YORK CITY, 1980-1990

By Francisco L. Rivera-Batiz

I. INTRODUCTION

This research report presents data showing that substantial progress was made toward economic equality on the basis of gender in New York City during the 1980s. Using the 1980 and 1990 U.S. Census of Population for New York, the study demonstrates that, in the 1980s: (1) the labor force participation of women grew sharply while men's remained relatively stable, (2) the proportion of women employed full-time increased dramatically, (3) the earnings shortfall of fully-employed women relative to men narrowed considerably, especially for younger cohorts, and (4) there was a significant increase in the proportion of women in the higher-paying jobs that men used to dominate.

The narrowing of the gender economic gap in the 1980s represents a turnaround from the pattern established over the period from 1950 to 1980. Although women entered the labor force in record numbers during these years, the ratio of female to male earnings remained virtually unchanged. Since 1980, however, this research report shows that the pattern has been reversed.

In spite of the overall economic progress of women in New York City during the 1980s, there remain serious concerns about their relative status. Firstly, the boom of the 1980s was not equally shared among all women in New York. Women at the bottom of the economic ladder improved little during the decade and those in unskilled occupations actually *worsened* in economic well-being during the period. Secondly, the social and economic status of women in New York City remains substantially below that of men. There is still a large shortfall in the labor force participation of women relative to men, overrepresentation among low-paying occupations, and evidence of employment discrimination. These factors largely account for the fact that, for all persons 16 years of age or over

(including those in the labor force and outside the labor force), the average personal income of women in 1991 was still close to half that of men.

The paper relies on data from the 5 percent Public Use Microdata Samples for the 1980 and 1990 U.S. Census of Population, as tabulated by the author. This has been supplemented with some data from the March 1992 Current Population Survey of the U.S. Department of Commerce and other sources.

II. BRIDGING THE GAP: THE ECONOMIC PROGRESS OF NEW YORK CITY WOMEN IN THE 1980S

The proportion of both men and women in the labor force rose in New York City during the 1980s, but the increase among women was much more substantial. As Table 1 displays, the proportion of men in the labor force increased slightly, from 70.5 percent in 1980 to 71.8 percent in 1990. Among women, however, there was a jump from 47.8 percent in 1980 to 56.2 percent in 1990. Table 1 shows that the increase in female labor force participation was distributed among all the major racial/ethnic groups in New York. The highest, and most stable, labor force participation rate, for both men and women, occurred among the Asian population

TABLE 1

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN NEW YORK CITY, 1980 AND 1990
Persons 16 years of age or older

Race/Ethnic Group	Labor force Participation Rate, 1980 (%)		Labor Force Participation Rate, 1990 (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
New York City Average	70.5	47.8	71.8	56.2
Non-Hispanic White	71.8	47.5	71.5	52.3
Non-Hispanic Black	65.0	51.9	66.8	58.3
Hispanic Population	70.6	41.2	72.4	47.9
Asian Population	77.2	59.0	77.2	60.0

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, *1980 and 1990 United States Census of Population and Housing Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS)*. Author's tabulations.

Participation in the labor force means that the person is either employed or actively seeking labor market employment at the time of interview. There are significant differences in the type of labor force participation by gender: Women have traditionally had a greater presence in part-time work. This, of course, reduces women's earnings compared to men's. The pattern appears to be changing, though. Table 2 shows that, in New York City, the proportion of women employed full-time increased dramatically during the 1980s, from 28.3 percent in 1979 to 38.0 percent in 1989. The proportion of men fully-employed also rose, but not as sharply: from 57.1 percent in 1979 to 59.6 percent in 1990.

Even among those persons employed full-time, there has traditionally existed substantial inequality in the income received by men and women. Indeed, the ratio of female earnings to male earnings remained at about 60 percent in the U.S. in the 1950s, 1960s, and up to the late 1970s. In New York City, the earnings of women have traditionally been closer to those of men, compared to

TABLE 2

PERSONS WORKING FULL-TIME, BY SEX

1979 - 1989

As a Proportion of all Persons Aged 25 to 64, living in households

	Proportion of Persons Working Full-Time in 1979 (%)	Proportion of Persons Working Full-Time in 1989 (%)
Male	57.1	59.6
Female	28.3	38.0

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, *1980 and 1990 United States Census of Population and Housing Public Use Microdata Samples*. Author's tabulations.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

the national scene. In 1979, the earnings of women working full-time in New York City were equal to 71 percent of the earnings made by full-time male workers. In the 1980s, however, even this gap declined sharply. As Table 3 displays, in 1989 the annual earnings of women had risen to 77.5 percent of men's.

The gap in earnings between men and women varies by age group. Among younger cohorts, the gap is smaller than for older generations. However, the narrowing of the earnings gap in the 1980s applies to all generations. Table 3 shows that among women 25 to 34 years old, annual earnings in 1979 were 84 percent of men's. By 1989, this gap had narrowed to 88.3 percent. Even more significantly, for the group of New York City women in the 35 to 44 years old category, the ratio of their earnings relative to men in the same age group rose from 69.5 percent in 1979 to 79.3 percent in 1989. Given the relative stability of these ratios in America over the past thirty years, these results signal a remarkable bridging of the gender gap in the labor market.

TABLE 3

ANNUAL EARNINGS OF MEN AND WOMEN WORKING FULL-TIME

NEW YORK CITY, 1979 AND 1989

Age Group	1979 Annual Earnings Men (A)	1979 Annual Earnings Women (B)	1979 Women to Men Earnings Ratio (B/A)	1989 Annual Earnings Men (A)	1989 Annual Earnings Women (B)	1989 Women to Men Earnings Ratio (B/A)
25 to 64	$19,039	$13,525	71.0%	$39,447	$30,554	77.5%
25 to 34	16,563	13,926	84.0	34,285	20,282	88.3
35 to 44	20,138	13,989	69.5	41,651	33,010	79.3

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, *1980 and 1990 United States Census of Population and Housing Public Use Microdata Samples*. Author's tabulations

Part of the explanation for the narrowing of the male-female earnings gap lies in the fact that the occupational distributions of men and women in New York City became more similar during the 1980s. Women are now more visible in the higher-paying occupations that men have traditionally dominated. Among executive, administrative and managerial occupations for instance, the proportion of women grew from 33.9 percent in 1980 to 46.7 percent in 1990, a rather remarkable increase. Among technical workers, the proportion of women rose from 46.7 percent in 1980 to 48.6 percent in 1990. The proportion of women in the major occupations groups is displayed by Table 4.

TABLE 4

WOMEN AS A PROPORTION OF THE LABOR FORCE, BY OCCUPATION
NEW YORK CITY, 1980 - 1990

Occupational Group	Proportion Female, 1980	Proportion Female, 1990
Executive, Administrative & Managerial	33.9	46.7
Professional	52.1	56.2
Technical	46.7	48.6
Sales	48.2	49.9
Administrative Support	71.2	71.7
Private Household Occupations	94.6	94.6
Protective Services	11.9	16.9
Other Services	50.6	54.6
Farming, Forestry, Fishing	15.7	15.5
Precision Production, Craft and Repair Occupations	11.7	15.5
Machine Operators, Assemblers and Inspectors	55.0	54.1
Transportation Workers	5.7	6.8
Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, Helpers and Laborers	21.7	18.6

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, *1980 and 1990 United States Census of Population and Housing Public Use Microdata Samples*. Author's tabulations.

The expansion of women into traditionally male occupations in New York City reflects a nationwide pattern closely associated with the growing graduation of women with degrees pertaining to those occupations. Table 5 shows the rising proportion of women with degrees granted by professional schools. Among those receiving law degrees, the proportion of women grew from 32.4 percent in the 1980-81 academic year to 43 percent in 1990-91. Among business and management college degrees, women constituted 36.7 percent in 1980-81 but this rose to 47.2 percent in 1990-91. Even engineering college graduates, a traditionally male contingent, had a larger proportion of women in 1990-91 when compared to 1980-81, although the increase for this profession was comparatively small, from 10.3 percent to 13.9 percent.

TABLE 5

WOMEN AS A PROPORTION OF ALL DEGREES GRANTED, BY FIELD OF STUDY
(INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION)

Field of Study	Proportion Female, 1980-81	Proportion Female, 1990-91
Dentistry	14.4	32.1
Medicine	24.7	36.0
Veterinary Medicine	35.2	57.1
Law	32.4	43.0
Business & Management	36.7	47.2
Engineering & Related	10.3	13.9

Source: U.S. Department of Education, *Trends in Degrees Conferred by Institutions of Higher Education: 1984-85 through 1990-91*, Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, August 1993.

III. A BRIDGE TOO FAR: THE GENDER GAP THAT REMAINS TO BE CLOSED

In spite of the overall progress exhibited by women in New York City in the 1980s, as documented in the previous section, there are reasons to remain deeply concerned by the remaining patterns of gender inequality in the labor market. Firstly, the pattern of progress over the 1980s was not equally shared by all women. Secondly, women in the labor market still face steep barriers when compared to men.

Although the average earnings of women in New York City increased during the 1980s, the wages of those who have not completed high school declined during the same time period (adjusted for inflation). Table 6 displays the changes in the annual earnings of men and women (aged 25 to 34) in New York City from 1979 to 1989, adjusted for inflation, according to educational attainment. The inflation-adjusted earnings of female workers with no high school diploma *declined* by 4.1 percent in the 1980s. Among men the earnings received by those with no high school diploma stayed basically unchanged in the decade, when adjusted for inflation. For high school graduates, earnings increased very slightly in the decade, by 4.8 percent for women and 2.1 percent for men. For people with some college education, the income changes in the 1980s were more positive. For women with some college education, earnings during the 1980s went up by 9.2 percent while for men the increase in earnings was 9.1 percent. For college graduates, the earnings improvement was substantial: For women, earnings went up by 25.4 percent; among men, the increase was 21.9 percent. The largest gains occurred for men and women with some post-college education. For women in this group, the earnings gain during the 1980s was equal to 42.8 percent. For men the corresponding gain was 56.5 percent.

The data thus suggest that women with higher education benefitted much more from the city's economic boom of the 1980s than women with little education.

TABLE 6

THE ECONOMIC RETURNS TO EDUCATION IN NEW YORK CITY, 1979 AND 1989

Average Annual Earnings of Full-Time Workers, 25-34 years old

Group, By Educational Attainment		1979 Earnings (1990 $)	1989 Earnings (1990 $)	% Change 1979 to 1989
Less than High School	Men	19,780	19,793	0.0%
	Women	15,315	14,693	-4.1%
High School Graduate	Men	25,184	25,718	2.1%
	Women	19,909	20,861	4.8%
Some College	Men	28,088	30,652	9.1%
	Women	24,577	26,844	9.2%
College Graduate	Men	34,490	42,057	21.9%
	Women	28,451	35,677	25.4%
Post-College Education	Men	38,090	55,817	46.5%
	Women	31,688	45,263	42.8%

The inflation-adjusted data for 1979 earnings are in 1989 dollars and have been adjusted by the change in the Consumer Price Index for the New York Metropolitan Area between 1979 and 1989 as published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Source: 1980 and 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing 5% PUMS. Author's tabulations.

Indeed, women with less than a high school education suffered a reduction in income (taking into account inflation), which is associated with the well-known rise in female poverty rates in the 1980s. The numbers in Table 6 paint a bleak picture for the economic prospects of persons with no high school diploma, especially women. The $14,693 income of a full-time year-round female worker in 1990 was barely able to sustain a family of four (say a mother and three children) above the poverty level.

What explains the rise in the returns to education? By any measures, the increased returns to education in New York during the decade are astounding. In

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

1979, women with a college degree in New York had earnings that were 42.9 percent higher than women with just a high school diploma. By 1989, women with a college degree in New York had earnings that were 71 percent higher than women with just a high school diploma. The sharply higher value of a college degree relative to a high school diploma in New York also applies among men.

Much research has been undertaken to determine the cause of the rise in the returns to education, especially in urban areas. Economic restructuring, in the form of a flight of blue-collar manufacturing from urban to suburban areas, replaced with an increase in white-collar service sector employment in the cities, has been postulated as an explanation for the drop of economic opportunities for unskilled, blue-collar workers. Other explanations have focused on: (1) the labor market effects of increased immigration, which has augmented the relative supply of unskilled workers in the U.S. during the 1980s; and (2) the increased import competition suffered by the United States from developing countries during this time period and the resulting decrease in the demand for unskilled labor. The significance of these factors in explaining the rise in the return to education is limited. The research by economists Kevin Murphy of the University of Chicago, Finis Welch of UCLA, and Alan Krueger of Princeton suggests that most of the drop in the wages of unskilled workers relative to educated labor in the United States during the 1980s is related to technological change in the workplace. These technological changes, such as those relating to the use of computers, reduced the demand for unskilled workers, shifting upwards the demand for highly-educated labor. The result was an increase in the wage premium paid to education in the labor market.

The greater income growth of the highly-skilled in the past decade means that groups with low levels of educational attainment gained comparatively less from New York's economic boom in the 1980s, and some lost during the decade. One such group is foreign-born workers. Due to the comparatively low skills of recent

immigrants to the U.S. over the last twenty years, the foreign-born now constitute a group with educational attainment substantially below that of American-born (native-born) persons. In 1990, for instance, 30 percent of all the native-born in New York City with 25 years of age or older had completed college. By contrast, only 16.7 percent of the foreign-born population of New York City 25 years old or over had a college degree. Table 7 shows the growth in personal earnings of native-born and foreign-born New Yorkers in the 1980s. As established earlier, women workers in general had higher earnings growth than men in the past decade. However, the income gain of native-born women was substantially higher than that of foreign-born women. Indeed, the average income of native-born female workers in 1989 was 31.1 percent over their 1979 income. Native-born female workers, on the other hand, had an average gain of 17.1 percent in earnings during the 1980s.

TABLE 7

THE GROWTH IN EARNINGS OF NEW YORKERS:
NATIVE-BORN VERSUS FOREIGN-BORN WORKERS

Workers 16 years of age and older

Population Group	Earnings Growth, 1979 to 1989 (%)	
	Male	Female
Native-Born Workers	22.4%	31.1%
Foreign-Born Workers	7.1	17.1

Earnings Growth is computed as the gain in personal earnings from 1979 to 1989 as a proportion of earnings in 1979, where the earnings in 1979 are inflation-adjusted, expressed in 1989 dollars.

Source: 1980 and 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing 5% PUMS; Author's tabulations.

Even among the native-born population, some racial and ethnic groups were unable to benefit substantially from the New York boom of the 1980s because of their lower educational attainment. For instance, 36.9 percent of the native-born white population of New York City with 25 years of age or older had a college degree in 1990. But among the corresponding black population the proportion of college graduates was only 12.5 percent, one third the college attainment of whites. And among Hispanics the proportion was 14.9 percent. Associated with these differences in educational attainment were substantial differences in economic progress in the 1980s. Table 8 exhibits the growth in the personal earnings of various groups of native-born men and women in the 1980s. Among white women, earnings growth in the decade was 37.7 percent. By contrast, black women gained an average of 20.8 percent, and for Latinas the earnings growth was 24.7 percent. Table 8 shows that a similar ranking of economic progress in the 1980s by race and ethnicity holds for men, although as noted earlier, the overall gain in the earnings of men was substantially below that of women in the 1980s.

TABLE 8

GROWTH IN THE EARNINGS OF NATIVE-BORN WORKERS IN NEW YORK, BY RACE AND ETHNICITY

Workers 16 years of age and older

Ethnic/Racial Group (Native-Born Workers)	Earnings Growth, 1980 to 1990 (%) Male	Female
Non-Hispanic White	28.1%	37.7%
Non-Hispanic Black	9.8	20.8
Hispanic	13.7	24.7
Asian	17.9	20.7

Earnings Growth is computed as the gain in personal earnings from 1979 to 1989 as a proportion of earnings in 1979, where the earnings in 1979 are inflation-adjusted, expressed in 1989 dollars.

Source: See Table 7.

Besides not being equally distributed among skilled and unskilled workers, the economic progress of women in New York City during the 1980s hides the fact that the economic gap between men and women in the labor market remains wide open. There are still major differences in the distribution of occupations by gender. Women remain heavily concentrated in administrative support, clerical, and private household occupations: over 70 percent of persons in administrative support and clerical occupations were women in 1990 and so were 94.6 percent of persons in private household occupations. A total of 96.1 percent of all secretaries in New York City and 88 percent of all nurses were women. By contrast, some high-paying occupations are still male bastions. Only 14.9 percent of engineers in New York City are women, 28.4 percent of lawyers are female, and 26.9 percent of physicians and dentists are women.

In addition, full-time labor force participation remains low among women when compared to men. Only 26.1 percent of women aged 25 to 64 in New York City were working full-time, year-round in 1989. By comparison, 51.3 percent of the men were working full-time year-round. This disparity in labor market participation generates personal income which is much lower for women relative to men.

IV. NEW YORK CITY VERSUS THE NATIONAL PATTERN

The trends described in this report apply explicitly to New York City. At the same time, the analysis is representative of the progress of women in the United States in general. The work of Harvard University's Claudia Goldin, the Census Bureau's Suzanne Bianchi, and others suggests that the economic status of women in the nation overall improved significantly in the 1980s, after slower growth in the 1960s and 1970s. Tables 9 and 10 show indeed that the trends found for New York City (NYC) also apply to the United States (USA). Table 9 displays the changes in labor force participation for NYC and USA during the 1980s. Table 10 exhibits the changes in the proportion of men and women working full-time.

TABLE 9

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN NEW YORK CITY AND THE UNITED STATES, 1980 AND 1990

Persons 16 years of age or older

Race/Ethnic Group	Labor force Participation Rate, 1980 (%)		Labor Force Participation Rate, 1990 (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
New York City Average	70.5	47.8	71.8	56.2
United States Average	77.4	51.5	76.1	57.5

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, *1980 and 1990 United States Census of Population and Housing Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS)*. Author's tabulations.

TABLE 10

PERSONS WORKING FULL-TIME, BY SEX

NEW YORK AND THE UNITED STATES, 1979 - 1989

As a Proportion of all Persons Aged 25 to 64, living in households

	Proportion of Persons Working Full-Time, Year Round in 1979 (%)	Proportion of Persons Working Full-Time, Year Round in 1989 (%)
Male, NYC	57.1	59.6
US	67.2	66.2
Female, NYC	28.3	38.0
US	30.0	38.9

Source: New York City: U.S. Department of Commerce, *1980 and 1990 United States Census of Population and Housing Public Use Microdata Samples*. Author's tabulations.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The research reported in this report can be summarized as:

1. The proportion of women in the labor force grew substantially in New York City during the 1980s, from 47.8 percent in 1980 to 56.2 percent in 1990.

2. The proportion of women working full-time increased dramatically in the previous decade, from 28.3 percent in 1979 to 38.0 percent in 1989.

3. The earnings gap between men and women in New York City has narrowed considerably. In 1979, the annual earnings of women working full-time in New York were 71 percent those of men. By 1989 the earnings of women had risen to 77.5 percent of men's. Among young women, aged 25 to 34 years, earnings relative to men's grew from 84 percent in 1979 to 88.3 percent in 1989.

4. Women are now more visible in the higher-paying occupations that men have traditionally dominated in New York City. Among executive, administrative and managerial occupations, for instance, the proportion of women grew from 33.9 percent in 1980 to 46.7 percent in 1990.

5. In spite of the economic progress of women in the 1980s, this progress was not shared equally among all women. Although, overall, female earnings rose in the 1980s, the wages of those without a high school diploma actually fell, when adjusted for inflation. For women aged 25 to 34, those without a high school diploma faced a reduction of 4.1 percent in their annual income between 1980 and 1990 (adjusted for inflation). By contrast, women with a college degree saw their inflation-adjusted income rise an average of 25.4 percent during the 1980s.

6. As a result of the rising returns to education, groups of workers with low levels of education did not benefit as much from the economic boom in New York during the 1980s. The foreign-born as well as black and Hispanic women gained substantially less when compared to native-born white women.

7. In spite of a significant narrowing, the gender economic gap remains substantial in many professions in New York City. In 1990, only 15 percent of all engineers, 28.4 percent of lawyers, and 26.9 percent of physicians and dentists in New York were women. And, despite the changes in the previous decade, full-time female labor market participation remains low compared to men: in 1990, only 38 percent of women aged 25 top 64 residing in New York City were working full-time year-round, as compared to 60 percent of men.